

WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, September 14th 2026. AT 9:00 A.M.
CASTLE VALLEY TOWN BUILDING - 2 CASTLE VALLEY DRIVE

**This meeting is 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 9:04 AM, and Stock called the roll.

Water Committee Members Present: John Groo, Sue Bellagamba, Pam Hackley

Water Committee Present on Zoom: Dave Erley, Bob O'Brien

Water Committee Absent: Ryan Anderson

Present at the anchor site: Sarah Stock, Egmont Honer, Laura Cameron

Present on zoom: Dana Rogers

REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Open Public Comment
2. Approval of Minutes
 - WAC meeting June 8th, 2026
 - Groo motions to approve, O'Brien seconds. All vote in favor.
 - WAC meeting August 10th, 2026
 - Groo motions to approve, Hackley seconds. All vote in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Appoint a co-chair for the WAC
 - Hackley volunteers to be the co-chair. Groo motions to appoint Hackley as co-chair of the WAC. O'Brien seconds. All vote in favor.

PRIORITY ACTION REPORTS

4. Water Management Plan Priority Action List
 - Water Rights - Groo
 - Groo is still working to clean up loose ends before his term ends in December, mostly administrative in nature. There are still pending changes to the Water Use Ordinance that will go through the Town Council.
 - Erley asks if the Division of Water Rights has been looped in with the change of water rights agent. WAC discusses our relationship with the UDWRi.
 - Stock responds that UDWRi has been notified of the staffing change.
 - Hackley asks of the Kane Creek/Echo Canyon development and if we should keep updated on their water rights change applications to the nearby Colorado River.
 - WAC discusses these change applications and agrees we should stay apprised of this issue.
 - Groo notes that the water rights change application does not directly affect the Town of Castle Valley.

- Well Metering – Stock/Groo/Honer
 - Honer is working on a catalogue of a list of possible technical solutions to metering wells that are available off the shelf. These come with limitations, such as reliance on WIFI networks, which would need another layer of technical solutions here in the valley.
 - Hackley brings up community concern over EMFs and that we should keep that in mind as we develop a program.
 - Honer responds that the levels of radiation we are considering with the individual units of the mesh network are less than any electronic watch, so very very low, and even unmeasurable.
 - Honer is also working on a technical overview of our currently proposed program, which is more of a home-brewed solution. He is pretty sure we can include ultrasonic measuring at our price point, which is great and increases our accuracy significantly. He has been looking at documentation from the State Engineer about metering requirements, of which there are not really any clear technical specifications.
 - Stock will facilitate connecting Honer to Stallings at UDWRi to talk through proposals.
 - Honer asks for known program specifics and who/ what position at the town would be taking the ensuing working load (data accuracy review, installation, troubleshooting, grant writing).
 - The WAC discusses order of operations for developing the proposal and these specific questions are unknown. O’Brien suggests keeping the town abreast of the potential employee hours required to steward the project before a full proposal is available. Hackley highlights that Buck and Duncan would need to know of grant opportunities in order to apply for them.
 - Honer will have a technical proposal in the coming weeks.
- Castle Creek – Hackley
 - The USGS has funding for the Castle Creek streamgauge through 2029. If we want to see this continued, we may have to work to find future financing for this.
- Aquifer Monitoring (UGS Program) – Stock/O’Brien
 - Fall sampling will be in October and will include the usual fall testing for phosphates in two of the monitoring wells.
- Non-Potable Water for Cisterns – Groo
 - No updates, we are still seeking a suitable existing well for this project.
- Grand County Watershed Protection Overlay District – O’Brien
 - O’Brien outlines potential future action on the watershed protection overlay district during the Land Use Code update, possibly in January. O’Brien has been talking to some of the candidates for Grand County Commission to update them on water issues. If the commission is supportive, we could see positive change on this.
- DRWi Appropriations Policy for CV – Erley
 - Stock reviews some findings from an upstream water rights and potential development analysis.
 - Bellagamba notes that downstream water use is also important and would like to see the area around Red Cliffs ranch included in this endeavor.
- Explore options for protection of surplus water- Bellagamba

- Answer questions that Emily Lewis asked of us in her presentation last month and clarify goals around the use of water banking or using the instream flows statute.

What is the Council's timeline for a decision?

Has the Council identified potential lessees or partners for unused water?

Would the Town consider piloting with a portion of its unused rights first?

Are you looking for revenue?

Are you interested in piloting a groundwater conservation easement?

- Groo states that our overall goal is to protect our unused water rights.
- Bellagamba asks if there is the possibility of working with Emily Lewis' firm, Culp and Kelley LLP, as our water attorney.
- Groo is currently working with John Clyde of Clyde Snow on the Water Use Ordinance. Groo will recommend Culp and Kelley LLP as an additional water attorney for specific water matters to the Town Council.
- Hackley mentions the need for a retainer.
- Bellagamba makes a motion that the WAC recommends to the Council that TCV requests a letter of engagement from Culp and Kelley LLP so that TCV can work with attorney Emily Lewis on strategies for protecting TCV's unused water rights and other select water matters.
- Erley seconds the motion, all vote in favor.
- O'Brien desires more information on groundwater conservation easements and the conjunctive management of groundwater and surface water.
- What is the Council's timeline for a decision?
 - O'Brien: We are not in a rush, but we would like to move forward.
 - Groo: we are taking a long view, trying to be proactive, but no urgency.
- Has the Council identified potential lessees or partners for unused water?
 - No
 - Bellagamba: Hesitant to work on conjunctive management because there isn't discord in the valley, but we should try to further understand this option.
 - Bellagamba asks if we know we aren't going to use all of our surplus water rights, why are we trying to protect them?
 - Erley mentions a future where we may need or want more water for agriculture in the valley.
 - Bellagamba says we may want to hold onto paper waters right because we don't know what the future holds, and we may need it.
 - Erley mentions the fear of Spanish Valley trying to access water from Mason Draw and diverting flows out of the Placer Creek drainage to do so.
 - Stock mentions the 40 year plan and the need to write in scenarios that use more water like increased agriculture.
 - Erley states that the plan should also include climate change scenarios.
 - Erley brings up downstream tribes that might need the rights.
 - Bellagamba expounds on the Navajo/Utah water rights settlement.
 - Bellagamba says she would be interested in leasing to the Colorado River Authority to uphold compact requirements or keep elevations in Lake Powell at operational levels. She'd be interested in talking to Marc Stilson, the Principal Engineer for the Colorado River Authority of Utah (CRAU), to see if we could create an agreement that would help us keep this water, but also help the scenario on the Colorado River.

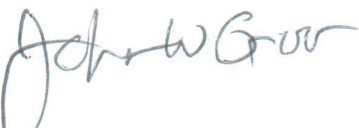
- Stock mentions the need to keep some water rights available for a potential high flow surface water use on Castle Creek, if it is possible to convert our existing groundwater rights to such a use.
 - Bellagamba states there is a current need for voluntary contributions from the Upper Basin of the Colorado River.
 - Erley asks if our contribution of surplus rights would count since we cannot necessarily show reduced use.
 - Bellagamba replies that she is not sure, and recommends that the WAC discuss with Stilson.
- Would the Town consider piloting with a portion of its unused rights first?
 - Yes
 - Are you looking for revenue?
 - Always appreciated, but not the primary goal.
 - Are you interested in piloting a groundwater conservation easement?
 - Stock says she would like more information on this.
 - Groo asks if we put water into a conservation easement, could we get it back if needed.
 - Groo/Erly wonder what it would take to quantify the amount needed to maintain a healthy aquifer and what would happen if we then conserve that.
 - Bellagamba mentions a tax benefit for conservation easements, but we are municipal, unsure how that would benefit us.
 - Stock asks if we are interested in protecting instream flows.
 - Bellagamba points out that we don't have surface rights to do so.
 - Erley emphasizes the need to protect flushing flows in the valley, and suggests that could be the purpose of a conservation easement.
 - Groo summarizes the WAC conversation concerning the questions from Emily.

ADJOURNMENT

Groo declares the meeting adjourned at 10:56 AM.

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



Chair's Signature

October 14th, 2026

Date