

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency Board Meeting and Process Assessment

April 23, 2020
Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency
Board Meeting



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Presentation Outline

1. Overview of Assessment Process
2. Outcomes
3. Solutions

Assessment Process

- April 6 - 17, 2020
- 11 Board members
- 5 Alternates
- 5 Standard Questions

Assessment Process

1. Do you understand the upcoming steps, timing and milestones the Board must take on SGMA decisions?
2. If not, what questions do you have about how the process is expected to unfold in the coming months?
3. What diminishes your ease and/or ability to openly engage in Board discussions?
4. What would help you be a more active participant in upcoming discussions?
5. Do you have suggestions on a different way to prepare the GSP and/or conduct these meetings so that Board member participation increases?

Outcomes

- ▶ Inhibitions to pose effective questions / comments.
- ▶ Volume of information makes it difficult to engage at meetings
- ▶ Lack of conversational tone.
- ▶ Reliance on member staff and consultants...“they have this under control...” .
- ▶ Limited time to study and prepare for meetings.
- ▶ Lack of comfort with other Board members. Lack of trust. Fear of being dismissed.

Outcomes

- ▶ Physical setting of the Scotts Valley Chambers.
- ▶ Discomfort with video conferencing.
- ▶ Duration of meetings. Reticence to interject and increase meeting duration.
- ▶ Belief that members have made up minds. Not open to discuss and learn in meetings.
- ▶ General fear of public speaking.

Solutions

1. Address lack of shared knowledge, understanding and pre-meeting preparation:
 - a. Institute “Office Hours” by SMGWA member agency staff before meetings.
 - a. Institute more “homework” that members must address between meetings

Solutions

2. Address intensity of technical presentations and impacts to Board and public input:
 - a. Make presentations smaller and simpler.
 - b. Break presentations into smaller sections that allow for discussions.
 - c. Make presentations and the associated meeting structure more “workshop” format.
 - d. Use facilitation techniques (consultant facilitator and Board Chair) that prompt and promote engagement.

Solutions

3. Address a lack of trust and security to speak candidly
 - a. Create opportunities (within allowable procedures under the Brown Act) for members and alternates to spend general time together before meetings and enhance interpersonal relationships.

Solutions

4. Address general Board member inhibitions to speak
 - a. Start meetings slightly later, allowing members to “change gears” and get mentally prepared for the SMGWA meeting.
 - b. Related to 3a, give members time to “warm up” conversationally by engaging with each other.
 - c. Consider shorter, more frequent meetings to allow deeper focus on each topic.

THANK YOU

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