I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Wayne Vineyard. Roll Call – Present: Rich Ferreira, Patricia Beard, Wayne Vineyard, John Nitta, Shanon Whamond and Patrick Bollinger. Absent: Larry Jordan, Stewart Perry and Jim Brenner.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR JANUARY 14, 2019, motion by Beard, second by Bollinger, MPUV; APPROVAL OF MINUTES from December 10, 2018 with some minor corrections from Josh, motion by Ferreira, second by Beard, MPUV.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT
Individuals may address the Commission on items under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Commission not included on this agenda for no longer than five (5) minutes. No action can be taken on items addressed under Public Comment. No Public comment.

IV. Action Items- NONE

V. INFORMATION ITEMS:

A. Introduction of New NID Directors
Laura Peters and Christopher Bierwagen introduced themselves to the Board.

Laura Peters is from the Thermalands area of Placer County. She has a vineyard and bees and knows how important NID water is to agriculture. She is a registered Civil Engineer with 26 years of practice in water resources. Her experience includes municipal water and wastewater planning, design, and construction inspection in private industry; and water supply planning, operations, and maintenance engineering at the County level. Most recently she has worked for the State of California in the capacity of program manager and program engineer at the State Water Board and Water Resources board. She sees her job as working on collective solutions with a priority of reasonable rates to NID customers; she feels we need to look at them in a new perspective and wants to really participate and liaison with Placer County people. She indicated that the budget (NIDwater.com Budget) was proposed with the assumed rate increase - she wanted to see a budget without the rate increase. Any rate updates would still need a Prop 218 hearing to increase the rates, which may be an increase of 5.72% for raw water and up to 65% for treated water. She would like to look at the cost of service report, etc.
Chris Bierwagen is from Chicago Park in Nevada County. His dad had served for 26 years on the NID Board. He feels he has served a lifetime with water issues, especially because his family has spent 97 years using NID water on their farm. He hit the ground running with all the issues of being a new Board member; including a lot of behind the scenes movement that is complicated. One if the primary issues for the NID Board will be balancing the budget. The management has been pushing for the expanded maintenance operation of NID, and say they need to raise rates. NID has some of the lowest water rates in the State. A lot of people in Placer County use NID water - which is not well known in Nevada County. He wants to find creative new ways to solve these problems - along with the energy distribution. He feels NID needs to have the big picture in mind for the State of California and the overall issues.

B. NID and PCWA WATER SUPPLY UPDATES FOR 2019 SEASON

NID – Chip Close

Bowman Lake precipitation is 75% of average. NID reservoir storage is 67% of capacity, which is 95% of average. NID 2018 treated water usage was down 12% from 2013 usage. Chip indicated that people have continued to conserve. He attributes this to the NID campaign - as well as the state’s messages - and customers reacted and continued to conserve. There is an educational budget and they do programs such as mulch madness, etc. The automated measuring system that measures the head and tail ends of each canal flow will let them see what waste there may be - but this will take time. Waste has been modified. Raw water usage has not been increasing, even though customers have increased. People have been quite conservative. Local creeks have dried up because of the less run-off by being conservative. Combie Reservoir had turbid releases recently as it was lower than normal for maintenance; the silt had built up, but it was too late to stop the water release - bringing more water in just caused more turbidity. They were dredging for mercury during this time with the lower lake level, but all the work was being monitored. No mercury was being released in the process; there is no methyl mercury produced when the water is released downstream. The sediment causes a loss of storage capacity - and this happens each year. We need to look at all options for storage. The dam at Combie used to have a valve at the bottom to release the sediment, but it is not in use anymore. At the end of each September, Combie is drained down to 15 feet to get a visual on the dam and do maintenance for about 30 days or so.

PCWA also provided a report: water storage is about 70% of normal for this time.
C. INDUSTRIAL HEMP STATUS UPDATE – Josh Huntsinger, Placer County Agricultural Commissioner

Legal status of industrial hemp which is Cannabis sativa with 3/10 percent or less of THC content, is evolving. Hemp was grown for fiber and seed oil for centuries. The importation of hemp products is not illegal, just the cultivation of the plant. If the Federal Government authorizes industrial hemp, then the State will do so also. In 2016, Prop 64 allowed the State to move forward on an industrial hemp program. In December, 2018 the President signed the Farm Bill which legalized industrial hemp as an Ag crop. It removed it from the controlled substances act and is now under USDA oversight. If the THC content is in excess of the legal amount, then it will fall under different regulations. Each state will have to develop its own plan for growing, but California is moving forward with its State plan, and it will probably be eight months to a year before it is approved. State law says that the Agricultural Commissioner in the County will monitor the growing, including regulations for county registration and required testing for the THC content before sales can be done, so there will be more detail coming. The current County ordinance on cannabis regulations excludes industrial hemp, so it will fall under other agricultural crops. There is still a potential for an odor issue if crop goes to flower (land use nuisance issue). There will need to be testing provisions outlined by the State. Other counties have put into place a temporary moratorium until the State develops regulations and allow the Ag Commissioner to register the growing locations and follow through with testing when these processes are in place. Another option is to have Placer County come up with our own regulations and address concerns through local ordinance. Oregon has industrial hemp growing on a large scale for seed and oil. Kentucky is the leading state of production right now.

D. UCCE FARM ADVISOR AND COUNTY BUSINESS STRUCTURE UPDATE – Josh Huntsinger, Placer County Agricultural Commissioner

The Placer County CEO recently initiated a series of changes to reorganize the reporting structure of a number of county departments. This reorganization initiative of approved by the county Board of Supervisors at their December 18th meeting. One of the CEO’s changes will bring the Farm Advisor’s county staff and budget under supervision of the Agricultural Commissioner. The Farm Advisor’s day to day operations and reporting structure will not be impacted by this change. The County currently provides staff and material support worth approximately $500,000 per year. The new alignment would bring the three County staff under the Ag Commissioner reporting line. This would not provide any direct supervision over the Farm Advisor programs and activities, only enhance the support for activities that the Farm Advisor provides. This change would not affect the competitive grants that the Farm Advisor gets.

There is no existing memorandum of understanding between the county and UC Cooperative Extension, so one is being developed. There should have been one in 1915 - and in 1965 - but no one can find it.
VI. REPORTS

A. Agricultural Marketing Program – Josh Huntsinger

Ag marketing program - Placer County and the Visitor’s Bureau- teamed up during “Restaurant Week” connecting Placer restaurants with local mandarins and featured chef activities on social media - and this was a good example working with tourism folks and agriculture endeavors. This same type of activity may be able to be repeated with other crops.

B. Economic Development Board – Lyndell Grey - no report

C. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor – Dan Macon - not available (Cindy Fake to report)

D. Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor – Cindy Fake

Cindy reported on farmer training workshops, an Extension event which was an open house for farmers and ranchers; about 35 people attended, at least 10 or more people were new, younger people looking for information. They had a farmer-to-farmer breakfast last week with a speaker on crop insurance and whole farm revenue. Attendees learned about crop insurance and who will write it. There is a blog describing these workshops. There will be a workshop on Farm and Ranch business planning - January 31st to March 1st. See list of upcoming workshops. Dan also has a lot of workshops; shepherding skills, etc. Rain was not good for pasture development in the fall, but the warm weather will help grass growing in the next few months. There will not be a 4H advisor with UC Cooperative Extension because of funding issues from the State.

E. Water Supply Update – Josh Huntsinger - see previous NID and PCWA reports.

VII. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER’S REPORTS – Josh Huntsinger

Commissioner report: Beekeeping ordnance - will start registering bees and beekeepers. New ordinances are being considered as beekeeping neighbor complaints are common.

The Board of Supervisors heard an appeal on timber production zones and caretaker unit. At issue was a 66-acre parcel and a proposed caretaker residence of 5500 square feet with a minor use permit that had expired. The new owner thought he had the same minor use permit and could still build the house. The Zoning Administrator approved the permit even though the County had passed a 1200 square foot limit on new caretaker residences. Grandfathering issue discussion with the Board and discussion of the timber harvest plan; they did uphold the minor use permit, but land owner must do the improvements and fulfill the timber harvesting guidelines.

Chair Vineyard reported on a San Francisco Chronical article that mentioned Stewart Perry winning three awards for his wine: Placer County is gaining a good reputation for its wine.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.