

MH GM searches for water sale

By Denise Ellen Rizzo | Posted: Friday, June 19, 2015 2:30 am

MOUNTAIN HOUSE — As concerns about the statewide drought grow, community directors are prepared to spend \$500,000 on an emergency water supply to keep water flowing through the summer and fall.

At the June 10 board meeting, the Mountain House Community Services District Board of Directors voted 5-0 to authorize General Manager Edwin Pattison to spend up to \$500,000 to buy an emergency humanitarian water supply.

“This is an emergency supply of water, and I can’t underscore the importance of it,” Pattison told the board.

During a public meeting Tuesday, Pattison told the board and about 100 community members about a decision Friday by the State Water Resources Control Board to completely curtail water for agencies whose water rights were granted after 1914. Byron Bethany Irrigation District, which is the community’s sole source of water, has been cut off completely from drawing water from the Delta.

Mountain House buys its water from Byron Bethany Irrigation District for \$148 per acre-foot, but Pattison said he wanted a second supply available to the community.

The cost of water could range from \$250 per acre-foot to more than \$1,000 per acre-foot, he said, depending on where it was bought.

“The drought is beginning to hurt people where they live,” he said on Wednesday.

Board members reacted to his proposal with concern.

Director Jim Lamb asked if the water purchase would be enough to get the community through the end of the year, and Pattison explained that he expected to need an additional 1,800 acre-feet of water to make it through to January.



MH Water

Mountain House General Manager Edwin Pattison updated the residents of Mountain House on water supply and conservation plans during a town hall meeting Tuesday night in the Community Services District board room at 230 S. Sterling Drive.

Flanking Pattison were San Joaquin County Sheriff Steve Moore and French Camp McKinley Fire District Chief Paul Tualla. Both men answered questions about their services to the community.

Lamb said that the bottom line, a household cost of roughly \$20 a month, would be better than requiring residents to do over the landscaping of their properties with no irrigation water.

“Even if we had to pay twice as much at \$40 per household per month, I think people would pay that to have running water,” Lamb said.

The general manager told the board that Mountain House households had been using an average of 90 gallons of water per person each day, but the rumored curtailment would cut that in half.

On Tuesday, Pattison said he was still trying to find a water agency willing to sell to the community, even though the water board had not yet ordered any changes for Mountain House.

“We’re doing everything we can conserve and I’m doing everything I can to purchase emergency water,” he said. “With the water purchase, we’re still pushing conservation measures, but we want to keep people’s taps open.

“We’re trying to get through to the end of the year,” he said.