I. Welcome and Introduction of Council Members
Chairman Tom Buschatzke called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance to the first meeting of the new Governor’s Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council (Council). Chairman Buschatzke stated that Executive Order 2019-02 created the new Council at the end of January. The Chairman read one of the statements of the executive order, “it is important for the work of the Governor’s Water Initiative to be continued and expanded upon through the creation of a new Council with a long-term focus on water augmentation, innovation and conservation.” This new Council replaces the previously existing Governor’s Water Augmentation Council (GWAC). The Chairman explained that this first Council meeting will largely focus on process and transitioning from the previous Council. Council members introduced themselves individually along with their affiliation. Thirty-five of the forty-two members were present.

II. Chairman’s Opening Remarks
Chairman Buschatzke remarked on his understanding of how the Executive Order was created and how the new Council was established. He stated that concerns were raised during the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) discussions about the relatively short-term nature of the plan and that issues other than Colorado River issues needed to be addressed. According to the Chairman, the Executive Order recognizes that there’s much more to do on water within Arizona beyond the DCP, and that the Order has created a framework to have the wide variety of discussions regarding water that are necessary in this State. Chairman Buschatzke noted significant components of the new Executive Order as follows:

1. The Council will also investigate water innovation and conservation strategies, in addition to water augmentation.
2. The Council shall consider a communication plan for the State to accurately convey the status of its water supply resiliency and its efforts to maintain that status in the future.
3. The Council will assess the long-term impacts of conservation projects funded with monies from the Augmentation and Conservation Assistance Fund and shall report on those to the Governor, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate and the House and Senate Minority leaders annually beginning July 1, 2020.

III. Transition
As background, Chairman Buschatzke explained the intent and process of the Water Initiative, which was designed to move forward on two tracts: The Planning Area Process and the GWAC. Gerry Walker,
ADWR staff, presented a recap of the Planning Area Process from 2016 through 2017 and stated that it is important to continue to update the water demand sectors of all planning areas, but this exercise will take place outside the Planning Area process. Ms. Walker also updated the Council on the Desalination Committee’s work. That committee’s goal was to prepare a brackish groundwater project proposal. Two project areas were identified, but challenges within both areas limited the project feasibility at that time. The Desalination Committee has not met since April 2018.

Cyndi Ruehl, ADWR staff, presented a brief recap of the currently active Long-Term Water Augmentation (LTWA) Committee. Since June 2018, the committee has been working closely with its consultant, Carollo Engineers, on an augmentation options feasibility study as applied across all twenty-two planning areas. The final report is expected to be completed and presented to the Council in June of this year.

Chairman Buschatzke thanked Bob Lotts for his service chairing the Desalination Committee and Maureen George for her service chairing the LTWA Committee. Both have retired. Wade Noble has taken over Chairmanship of the LTWA Committee.

Chairman Buschatzke stated he believes it is imperative that work continue in the Desalination and LTWA Committees. If members of the Council disagree, Chairman Buschatzke suggested they contact him. No Council members voiced disagreement at the meeting. If any new members of the Council would like to join one or both committees, they are invited to contact the ADWR staff.

Chairman Buschatzke stated that some of the work of the Recycled Water Committee resulted in legislative change as part of the DCP package. He asked that Council members contact ADWR staff if they believe there were topics that warrant additional conversation. Staff will compile that information for the June Council meeting.

Chairman Buschatzke stated that he saw no reason for the Finance Committee to continue until such time that a project is identified. At that time, the Council could identify possible options for finance.

The Council agreed to carry the Desalination and LTWA Committees forward, provide input regarding new issues for the Recycled Water Committee, and discontinue the Finance Committee until specific projects are identified that require financing.

IV. New Topics for Council Consideration

Chairman Buschatzke proposed that a committee or committees of the Council be formed to discuss goals and conservation requirements for the 5th Management Plans of the Active Management Areas (AMA). Council discussion on this topic ensued. A Council member suggested the Council needs to be fully informed as to what has happened so far in each of the water use sectors and AMAs.

The Chairman reminded the Council that its scope is statewide and asked for input regarding other issues outside the AMAs that need to be discussed and considered by the Council. Topics identified by the Council were:
• Identify areas in the state that have potential for storage and recharge
• Watershed/forest health and system loss due to catastrophic events
• Resolve stream adjudications
• Look at rules for the determination of adequate water supply outside the AMAs for those using the C-aquifer and R-aquifer located in the Coconino Plateau Basin
• River transfers
• Phreatophyte eradication
• Relationship between different sectors and broader policy discussions

The following were provided to the Chairman after the meeting by a member who had to leave the meeting early:
• Residual groundwater pumping
• Exempt wells impacts
• Access to renewable water supplies
• Environmental protection
• Identification of critical “hotspot” areas within AMAs
• Physical availability of groundwater for assured water supply

Chairman Buschatzke noted that Council members should be very specific regarding adjudication-related topics as many topics can only be settled by the courts and not this Council. He asked the Council to contact ADWR staff with additional ideas and comments to be addressed by the Council.

V. Discussion of the Augmentation and Conservation Assistance Fund
Chairman Buschatzke stated that along with the new Executive Order, an additional $2 Million in grant funding will be added to the currently existing Augmentation and Conservation Assistance Fund beginning July 1, 2019. Einav Henenson, new Statewide AMA Director, presented on how the Augmentation and Conservation Fund currently works. She noted that the additional monies would be treated in a similar manner with the exception that they would be distributed as grants and will be tracked separately so the Council can report on the impacts of the projects funded by this money as required by the Executive Order. Ms. Henenson stated that, in general, the additional $2 Million will be divided between the AMAs on a per capita basis. The current funded projects are education and outreach projects and more technical and “proof of concept” projects. Projects are recommended to the Director of ADWR by the Groundwater Users Advisory Council. The Director makes the final approval regarding expenditure of the funds.

VI. Closing Remarks and Next Meetings
Chairman Buschatzke opened the floor to public comment. None was heard.

Chairman Buschatzke stated that the Executive Order states that the Council will meet on a quarterly basis. Committees and working groups may be meeting more often between Council meetings. The Council will be notified when the June and September dates are confirmed. Also, the Council’s webpage at ADWR will be up and running in the next couple of weeks. He requested that Council members inform ADWR staff if their assistants need to be added to the Council contact list to receive
meeting notices and correspondence. The Council was informed that members can contact the following ADWR staff: Gerry Walker at glwalker@azwater.gov and Cyndi Ruehl at cruehl@azwater.gov.

Misael Cabrera, Director of ADEQ, took the opportunity to share information regarding the International Boundary Water Commission and repairs to the International Outfall Interceptor. He noted that the project involves wastewater from Nogales, Mexico, which is treated in Rio Rico, Arizona, and recharges into the Santa Cruz River. The partnership has been able to leverage $26 Million but is $1.59 Million short of what is needed to provide the infrastructure repairs, according to Cabrera.

VII. Adjournment

Chairman Buschatzke closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and stating that the Council will be a great forum for bringing to light water issues and collaborative work.