

Regular Meeting
April 18, 2023
6:00 pm

Meiners Oaks Water District
202 W. El Roblar Drive
Ojai, CA 93023-2211

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mike Etchart, at 6:00 pm via teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Present: Board President, Mike Etchart, Board Directors: James Kentosh, Christian Oakland, Joe Pangea, and Christy Cooper. Staff Present: General Manager, Justin Martinez, and Board Secretary, Summer Ward. Attorney Present: Stuart Nielson.

Absent: None

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of March 21, 2023, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve March 21, 2023, Regular meeting minutes. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Pangea

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

4. Public Comments

- None

****The Board went into closed session at 6:02 pm****

5. Closed Session: The Board of Directors held a closed session to discuss litigation, pursuant to the attorney/client privilege, as authorized by Government Code Sections §54957 & 54956.8, 54956.9, and 54957.

- State case: SBCK vs. SWRCB, San Francisco Supreme Court, Case# CPF-14-513875

****The Board adjourned closed session at 6:21 pm****

Attorney S. Nielson stated that the Board discussed pending litigation in a closed session, and no action was taken.

6. Financial Matters

Approval of Payroll and Payables from March 16, 2023, to April 15, 2023, in the amount of:

Payables:	\$ 59,353.87
Payroll:	<u>\$ 46,255.11</u>
Total:	\$105,608.98

Director Cooper asked about the Southern CA Edison billing and analysis of Kwh. Mr. Martinez and Ms. Ward stated that as recently as last month, work on this started concerning conversations with Ventura Energy. This will be discussed at the Treatment Plant Committee.

Director Cooper made the motion to the Payroll and Payables from March 16, 2023, to April 15, 2023. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. Board Discussion/Actions

a. Approval of Coastal Instrumentation & Telemetry (CIT) quote to replace and upgrade the District auto-dialer and software, not to exceed \$20,000. (Martinez)

Mr. Martinez presented the quote Coastal Instrumentation & Telemetry (CIT) provided for replacing and upgrading the District auto-dialer and software. The MOWD SCADA system is a 25-year-old Zetron eight-channel auto-dialer that sends alarms to water operators when there is a triggering event at one of the facilities, i.e., tank low, chlorine levels, etc. The software is outdated and requires the programmer with CIT, Pete Zepperio, to retain an outdated laptop to connect to the system. Replacement of the auto-dialer and software will bring the District onto current software, providing up to 200 specific alarms, providing the staff with more details regarding the triggering event, and ultimately better water system management. This will also ensure future maintenance and repairs by technicians are more user-friendly. Mr. Martinez requested approval for an amount not to exceed \$20,000 within the System Maintenance budget, to allow for contingencies above the quoted amount of \$16,400.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the Coastal Instrumentation & Telemetry quote to replace and upgrade the District auto-dialer and software, not exceeding \$20,000. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

b. Review and discussion of Draft Resolution 20230516: Stage 1 Conditions. (Martinez/Ward)

Ms. Ward presented the draft Resolution 20230516: Stage 1 Conditions for discussion and approval at the next Regular Board meeting. Ms. Ward reported communicating with the Assistant General Managers at Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District regarding the Stage 1 conditions. The draft resolution is based on those discussions. Casitas Municipal Water District approved a resolution at April 12, 2023, Board meeting to declare Stage 1 conditions, adjust customer allocations, and discontinue the over-allocation fee, effective June 1, 2023. Ventura River Water District will be presenting a similar resolution at its next Board meeting, with the modification of reducing the over-allocation/water waste fee from \$5/unit to \$3 or \$4/unit.

The Board discussed the over-allocation fee. Ms. Ward will provide the MOWD Attorney with the various documents that reference the fee as over-allocation and drought surcharge to determine options for decreasing versus discontinuing the fee. The resolution will be presented on May 16, 2023, for approval and implementation, effective June 1, 2023.

No Public Comment.

No Motion

c. Review of Draft Financial Audit Reports for FY 2021-2022. (Martinez/Ward)

Ms. Ward presented the draft Financial Audit reports for FY 2021-2022, provided by Cindy Fanning, CPA. Ms. Ward reminded the Board that these are for review and discussion; any questions or comments will be relayed back to the auditor for consideration prior to the presentation of the Final Audit Statements and Reports at the May 16, 2023, Regular Board meeting at which Cindy Fanning, CPA will be present. The Board discussed the reports, had no questions or comments for the auditor, and looks forward to the presentation of the final statements and reports at the May meeting.

No Public Comment.

No Motion

d. Cost of Living Adjustment for staff, an increase of 5%, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Los Angeles area, effective July 1, 2023. (Etchart)

Director Etchart presented the Bureau of Labor Statistics Los Angeles area consumer price index (CPI) for February 2023, which shows a 5.1% inflation rate over last year. In August 2022, the CPI was 8%, and the Board approved a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for staff of 4%. Director Kentosh requested that the Board monitor the CPI over this coming year, as the inflation rate is flattening out, and consider approving the difference of 4% from 2022 to staff. The Board agreed to consider that additional adjustment in 2024. Director Cooper asked if the newly hired operator would be eligible for the COLA. Staff recommended that since the COLA would not be effective until July 1, 2023, and that employee started April 3, 2023, they should be included in the COLA.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the cost of living adjustment of 5% for staff, effective July 1, 2023. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

e. Approval of Compensatory Time Policy. (Martinez/Etchart)

Mr. Martinez presented the draft Compensatory Time policy, which was a result of a recommendation from the Executive Committee. Mr. Martinez referenced the staffing situation and current GM salary adjustment. The Committee recommended exploring options for alternatives to overtime pay. Mr. Martinez received input from the MOWD Labor Attorney, which is reflected in the draft policy. Director Kentosh requested consideration to change the calendar year cash out of accrued Compensatory Time to 12 months; however, the record-keeping for such a model would be complicated. Director Kentosh also recommended increasing the accrual limit from 40 to 80 hours. The Board agreed to revisit the policy if staff is reaching that limit and see if it would be appropriate to increase the limit at that time.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the Compensatory Time Policy. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

f. Approval of Temporary Part-Time Water Utility Worker Helper position from June 1 – November 30, 2023, not to exceed \$40,000. (Martinez/Etchart)

Mr. Martinez presented the request to hire a Temporary Part-Time Water Utility Worker Helper position, for the initial period of June 2023 – November 30, 2023, for an amount not to exceed \$40,000. Mr. Martinez explained that funds are available in the Nitrate Blending budget line item, a project that will not be happening this year. Mr. Martinez stated that this request is almost identical to the request which led to the hiring of Mr. Neary, under similar circumstances, to aid in field staffing. If approved, Mr. Martinez would like to share this job opportunity at the local high schools for upcoming graduates and in the regular job posting areas. The Board discussed recruitment efforts for this entry-level temporary position and recommended increasing the salary range from \$16-\$22 to \$18-\$24.

Director Pangea made the motion to approve the Temporary Part-Time Water Utility Worker Helper position from June 2023 – November 30, 2023, not to exceed \$40,000. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Pangea/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

8. General Manager's Report

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is 72%, up 55.9 feet since January 1, 2023. Some locations' seasonal rainfall totals were unavailable due to technical issues: Matilija Dam 63.33", M.O. Fire Station 41.38", and Nordhoff Ridge 70.37". The GIS mapping of the District has been completed by staff, and work attaching detailed asset information to each mapped item has been temporarily delayed while staffing is low. FY 22-23 Valve Replacement budget is \$50,000; three valve locations are currently out to bid. MKN & Associates is working toward the final design of the Replacement Treatment Plant; staff will schedule a committee meeting to review the contract. Curtis Hopkins, Hopkins Groundwater Consulting, submitted the Well Siting report with recommended sites. The Treatment Plant Committee will meet with Curtis Hopkins to review and discuss the findings and then bring the recommendations and presentation to the full Board.

Additionally, Curtis Hopkins recommends the District consider starting the further development of Well 4a now that the water table has risen. When the new Well 4a was drilled, the water table was very low and had not reached its potential production levels, likely due to plugged perforations. It is ideal for developing the well while the water table is high to open up those perforations. The GM will get bids for the development work. Core samples of the slide area of Hwy 33 near the Treatment Plant and wells have been taken and are in review before Caltrans engineering. Levi Maxwell will be on Military leave from April 24, 2023, through July 25, 2023. Jeffrey Groves, Water Utility Worker I began employment on April 3, 2023.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward presented the monthly Board Secretary report highlighting the completed District Income Survey data collection. Kennedy Communications is in the process of sending the finalized results to the state agencies for review. Additionally, Ms. Ward reported that all annual Conflict of Interest forms were submitted by the April 3 deadline. All have completed the bi-annual Anti-Harrasment and Ethics training, except for two. Staff submitted the SWRCB 2022 Water Use Report in January 2023; the SWRCB 2022 Electronic Annual Report is in progress, released March 13 and due by May 13; the new SWRCB Drought & Conservation monthly reporting due quarterly is in progress, due by April 30. The annual Consumer Confidence Report is in progress, pending data report from FGL. The annual report will be posted on the District website, and information will be included in the customer billing statement. As part of the new EPA Lead & Copper Regulation, the District engaged with Ziptility, our GIS provider, and has a customer survey in the April 30 bill statements. Staff will then perform the investigations at any residences that do not submit a response. Generalized District-wide data will be provided on the District website by June 2024 to meet the regulation deadline. Ms. Ward noted that the transition for the District phone and internet services is in progress; some delays with the internet, but they should be on track soon.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: Met and discussed the District's staffing needs, draft Compensatory Time policy, and staff surveys in preparation for the GM and Assistant GM performance reviews.
- UVRGA: No meeting.
- Budget/Rate Committee: No meeting.
- Emergency Management Committee: There is no meeting, but staff have been working on assignments from previous meetings.
- Allocations, New Meters & Expansion of Services Committee: No meeting.
- Grants: No meeting; we received notice from SWRCB that a project manager has been assigned to the Replacement Treatment Plant pre-application submitted and a conference call will be scheduled.
- Treatment Plant Design Ad Hoc Committee: No meeting; they are working on scheduling a meeting with Curtis Hopkins for Well Siting Study and SWRCB for the Treatment Plant grant application.

11. **Old Business**

- State Water: No update.
- Matilija Dam Removal Update: No update.

- Collaboration on drought response measures: No update.

12. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: Requested status of nitrate samples at Wells 8 and Ranchitos sites. Mr. Martinez stated they are being sampled monthly. Mr. Martinez will determine under what conditions the state regulators will allow Well 8 to return online.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: No report.
- Director Cooper: No report.
- Director Etchart: Staff surveys went out last week, and staff interviews with the Executive Committee will be scheduled in the coming week.

13. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on May 16, 2023. There being no further business to conduct at this time, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President