

Regular Meeting  
October 17, 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 p.m.

### 1. Call to Order

The Board President, Mike Etchart, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was also available via teleconference.

### 2. Roll Call

**Present:** Board President, Mike Etchart, Board Directors: Christian Oakland, James Kentosh, 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 September 19, 2023, Regular Board Meeting minutes.**

Director Pangea made the motion to approve the September 19, 2023, Regular meeting minutes. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Pangea/Cooper

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

### 4. Public Comments

- None

***\*\*The Board did not go into a closed session.\*\****

### 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.

- CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—EXISTING LITIGATION  
(Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Gov. Code § 54956.9)  
Name of case: *Santa Barbara Channelkeeper v. State Water Resources Control Board, et al.*,  
Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. 19STCP01176

Attorney S. Nielson confirmed the Board did not go into a closed session, and there are no actions to report.

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6. **Financial Matters**

**Approval of Payroll and Payables from September 16, 2023, to October 15, 2023, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 187,416.42
Payroll:	<u>\$ 55,718.19</u>
Total:	\$ 243,134.61

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables from September 16, 2023, to October 15, 2023. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

**a) Approval of Full-Time Field Operator I/II Position. (Martinez)**

Mr. Martinez presented the request for adding a new Full-Time Field Operator I/II position. The District has been challenged in maintaining consistent field staffing. The addition of the temporary position has proved valuable in assisting with daily maintenance and duties. The SWRCB Division of Drinking Water recommended that the District expand its field staff during the onsite Sanitary Survey in 2021. Creating a third full-time Field Operator would allow consistent staffing due to military, vacation, and illness-related absences. Additionally, this would allow for spreading the on-call duties to prevent staff burnout and meet the increasing regulatory requirements.

The current Water Utility Helper has obtained SCBA training and Fit testing; he is studying for his D2 certification and has demonstrated that the additional staffing is appropriate and needed.

The 2023 – 2024 Salary budget can accommodate the additional position. The entry-level Operator position starts at \$52,595, with a cap of \$81,592.

Director Kentosh stated he is not opposed but is nervous about hiring more staff than needed and proposed extending the temporary position to June 2024.

Director Cooper expressed concerns about extending the temporary status; permanent status tends to bring more loyalty.

Director Oakland added that the District needs to prevent future situations with inadequate staffing.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the Full-Time Permanent Field Operator I/II position. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea  
(5) – Ayes – M/S/C

**b) Review FY 2022 – 2023 Letter of Auditing Standards from Cindy Fanning, CPAs. (Martinez/Ward)**

Ms. Ward presented the FY 2022 – 2023 Letter of Auditing Standards from Cindy Fanning. There are no changes to the scope or standards from the previous fiscal audit.

Director Kentosh made the motion to receive and file the letter. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Cooper

(5) – Ayes – M/S/C

**c) Approval of Fixed Asset Policy. (Ward)**

Ms. Ward presented the draft Fixed Asset policy; staff could not find an existing policy in the District archives. Ms. Ward prepared this draft using other local water agencies and CSDA samples.

Director Kentosh asked where the \$5,000 threshold was determined. Ms. Ward clarified that this was a standard threshold used by many agencies.

Director Cooper complimented the organization of the policy and requested the Board consider increasing the threshold to \$10,000 due to the rise in costs and increase the one-year to three years.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Fixed Asset Policy with the changes to increase the acquisition cost to \$10,000 and the economic benefit period to three years. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(5) – Ayes – M/S/C

**d) Discuss Annual District Holiday Dinner for Directors and Staff. (Martinez/Ward)**

Mr. Martinez stated that the District's annual holiday dinner for Directors and Staff will be held again at Agave Maria's. Staff proposes Friday, December 15, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

We will do the short menu like in the past. The Board consensus was that the date and time worked for everybody. Ms. Ward will send out calendar reminders.

No Motion.

No Public Comment.

## 8. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is 71.4%; the report had a typo. The District did not purchase Casitas water this summer for the first time in several years. Mr. Martinez reported that the District ordered the chlorine alarms for the well buildings through CIT. GIS mapping has been completed, and staff are attaching details to each asset. The lead and copper service line inventory is 98% complete. The emergency backup water supply plan is in progress. The replacement treatment plant's final design is complete, and MKN is assisting with the grant application. MOWD is working with RWC on the Caltrans relocation for Hwy 33. Mr. Martinez shared that there have been two virtual meetings with Caltrans, Union Engineers, and the utility companies, as well as one onsite meeting. Unfortunately, these meetings have not been very productive. The District may have to move the line 5-6 ft to accommodate Caltrans' plans. An update to the Wells 4a & 7 break-in: the individual has been sentenced; security cameras have been added to those facilities, as well as the Treatment Plant, Well 8, and the Tank Farm. Mr. Martinez reported that Jeffrey Groves passed his D1 test, Garrett Lockwood has a pending D2 test date, and Levi Maxwell passed the T3 exam, pending license. There was a failure at the Zone 2 Fire Booster, cost pending from FH Pumps, and the relay and contactor for the Zone 2 hydro tank pumps 1 and 2 were failing; staff has been monitoring pressures; Oilfield Electric has been on site to assist with troubleshooting.

No Public Comment.

## 9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward presented the monthly Board Secretary report. The SWRCB DDW Drought & Conservation reporting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter was submitted. Office staff are actively working on the FY 22-23 Financial Audit. The Low Income Water Assistance Program has been officially extended through March 31, 2024. Eligible customers received \$4,306 in FY 22-23 and currently \$1,015 in FY 23-24. There was a jump in the number of re-reads in September due to a Beacon software glitch, requiring approximately 60 meters to be re-read.

No Public Comment.

## 10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met last week, nothing to report.
- Budget/Rate Committee: No report.
- Emergency Management Committee: The committee met and reviewed the Emergency Plan, which Director Oakland described as well-organized and easy to read. Ms. Ward ordered 500 emergency water containers in the event of a disaster, and water needs to be served from the tank for customer use.
- Allocations, New Meters & Expansion of Services Committee: The committee met; however, after the first customer on the agenda, the power went out, so the meeting ended. The remaining agenda item is to be rescheduled for the next meeting.
- Grants: No report.
- Treatment Plant Design Ad Hoc Committee: No report.

## 11. **Old Business**

- State Water: No report.
- Matilija Dam Removal Update: Mr. Martinez shared that he and Ms. Ward will be meeting with the County on Monday, October 23, to discuss the timeline and mitigation plans. Director Etchart asked if there was an update on the Camino Cielo Bridge. No update has been shared.

## 12. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: He noticed that there hasn't been a cost for software for document archiving; what is the status? Ms. Ward shared that when staff inquired with Mitec for recommendations, they suggested using Adobe Pro and file using our shared network folders. The District already has Adobe Pro, so no additional software is needed at this time.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: No report.
- Director Cooper: Met with the State for the grant application and also discussed the possibility of applying for a tank replacement. Director Cooper feels the District could submit that application without outside grant assistance. She noted that the District may not qualify for funding since the demand is currently being met; however, applying would be good. Director Cooper requested the next meeting agenda item for approval to submit a grant application for tank replacement.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on November 21, 2023 at 6:00 pm. There being no further business to conduct at this time, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

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**Board Secretary**

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**Board President**