

Regular Meeting
December 19, 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 Board President, Mike Etchart, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. 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 October 17, 2023, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the October 17, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

4. Public Comments

- None

*****The Board went into closed session at 6:04 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.

- PUBLIC EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE/DISMISSAL/RELEASE (Gov. Code § 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

*****The Board ended closed session at 6:17 pm.*****

Regular Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2023

Attorney S. Nielson reported that the Board discussed the two closed-session items, and there are no actions to report.

6. **Financial Matters**

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

Payables:	\$ 178,283.61
Payroll:	<u>\$ 57,687.59</u>
Total:	\$ 235,971.20

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

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Cooper

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a) Approval of Resolution 20231121: Approving the Replacement Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project and a filing Notice of Exemption. (Martinez/Cooper)

Mr. Martinez presented the resolution and Notice of Exemption form. Mr. Martinez reviewed that this is part of the grant application process for the replacement water treatment plant upgrade project. The Notice of Exemption identifies Class 2 (15302) and 3 (15303) categorical exemptions. Approval of the resolution approves the project and directs staff to execute and file the Notice of Exemption in accordance with the applicable provisions of the CEQA guidelines, 12 Cal. Code Reg—section 15062. The Committee will review and discuss the contents of the draft Environmental portion of the grant application.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve Resolution 20231121: Approving the Replacement Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project and filing a Notice of Exemption. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Pangea

Etchart - Y Kentosh - Y Oakland – Y Pangea – Y Cooper- Y

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

b) Approval of District Office Emergency Generator Electrical Design expense and engineering firm. (Martinez/Ward)

Mr. Martinez presented the request to fund the electrical design expense for a dedicated emergency generator located at the District Office. The District Office does not have backup power in a power outage. With the increase in rolling outages and SCE shutdowns during weather events, the District is at risk. The District Office houses the SCADA system and all administrative processes and limits communications. The District's portable backup generator can take an hour or more to retrieve and hook up. Under the direction of the Safety/Emergency Committee, the General Manager consulted with the District's electrical contractor, Oilfield Electric, for recommended electrical design firms. The General Manager presented three quotes: Lucci & Associates \$13,250, Ferranti Engineering \$10,500, and KSG Consulting Engineers \$8,860. Mr. Martinez noted that only Lucci & Associates and Ferranti did onsite assessments, and Ferranti is a local firm. Mr. Martinez added that the District did not budget for this item and recommended redistributing \$15,000 from the Valve Replacement line item with \$90,000.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the Ferranti Engineering firm not to exceed \$15,000. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(5) – Ayes – M/S/C

c) Approval of Badger AMI meters purchase per the approved AMI infrastructure program and FY 23-24 budget, not exceeding \$50,000. (Martinez)

Mr. Martinez reviewed that the District implemented an AMI (Smart Meter) infrastructure program to replace approximately 20% of the District each fiscal year. The plan is to change all Ag and Commercial meters first, then Residential. These meters will allow customers and the District real-time flow monitoring through the Eye on Water App and cellular reads, reducing staff time each month manually reading meters. There are no moving parts in the meters, and they have a warranty of 20 years. The 2023-2024 budget allows for the purchase of AMI meters up to \$50,000. Mr. Martinez recommends the Board approve the purchase of 135 E-Series meters for \$49,114.10; this would complete the Ag and Commercial conversion and start the replacement of some Residential.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the purchase of the 135 E-Series meters up to \$50,000. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(5) – Ayes – M/S/C

d) Discuss the proposed Casitas MWD rate increase. (Kentosh)

Director Kentosh discussed the upcoming Casitas MWD public hearing for the proposed rate increase. The primary impact on MOWD and its customers are the increases in both the volumetric rate (price per unit) and the meter capacity charges. Currently, the District, as a resale customer of CMWD, pays \$835.07 per month per connection (2 x 4" meters) and \$2.31/HCF. The proposed increase is scheduled over the next five years, 2026 proposed rates would increase to \$3,565.85 per month per connection (2 x 4" meters) and \$3.64/unit. The MOWD per customer per month standby fee would be roughly \$5/month. During the periods when MOWD has to purchase Casitas water, customers would continue to pay the standby fee plus the increased volumetric rate. Director Oakland asked if the rate study explained where the MOWD customers' property tax was being applied. Is it being used to help reduce rates or a specific project? Director Kentosh stated it was not evident in the documents he reviewed. Additionally, Director Oakland asked why, as a periodic user, MOWD is paying the same standby fee as the Casitas Ag and Commercial customers that regularly use their metered connections. Director Kentosh stated that the cost of having the capacity to serve at any point in time is the same; however, he could request clarification.

The Board majority was in consensus that the rate increases are significant and will have a direct impact on MOWD customers. Director Kentosh stated that while he disagreed with some opposition, he would support the Board's decision to submit a protest vote.

Board President Etchart directed staff to submit a protest vote on behalf of the District regarding the proposed CMWD rate increase.

No Motion.

No Public Comment.

8. General Manager's Report

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is 71.1%. Mr. Martinez reported that the District ordered the chlorine alarms for the well buildings, and they are being installed. Additionally, the AMI meters ordered last fiscal year have begun arriving and are being installed. GIS mapping has been completed, and staff are attaching details to each asset and fine-tuning asset locations. The Emergency Backup Plan is nearly complete and will be ready for Committee review. Highway 33 slide update: the SCE plans were approved, but we cannot begin work until the SCE poles are relocated, likely by the end of the year. Caltrans requests the District relocate our mainline; discussions continue regarding the final

design. Mr. Martinez is still waiting on the Well 4a refurbishment scope of work from Curtis Hopkins. Progress is being made on the replacement Treatment Plant design plans, which were sent to the SWRCB for review and input. The District had budget funds approved for purchasing a new crew truck; due to timeline constraints created by low supply, Mr. Martinez obtained three truck quotes from Ford, GM, and Dodge. The current trucks are increasing repair costs, including a cracked radiator, brakes, and transmission. Mr. Martinez had less than a week to purchase the 2022 Ford F-250, the only one in stock, for \$62,262.84, as the dealership was pushing to sell to another buyer.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward presented the monthly Board Secretary report. The SWRCB annual Water Use reports for October 2022 – September 2023 were submitted on October 24, 2023. The annual VC Environmental CERS reports are in progress and are due by December 31, 2023. Staff attended the SWRCB eAR Input Forum on November 2, 2023. Office staff continue working on the FY 22-23 Financial Audit.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: No report.
- Budget/Rate Committee: No report.
- Emergency Management Committee: No report.
- Allocations, New Meters & Expansion of Services Committee: No report.
- 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 met with the County on Monday, October 23, to discuss the timeline and mitigation plans. Staff expressed concerns regarding the silt load and potential funds if the District cannot pump water due to the silt. There will be future public hearings and opportunities to engage with the County and project group.

12. Director Announcements/Reports

- Director Kentosh: No report.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: No report.
- Director Cooper: No report.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on December 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm. There being no further business to conduct at this time, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President