

Regular Meeting
February 20, 2024
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 6:01 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. Attorney Present: Stuart Nielson.

Absent: Summer Ward, Board Secretary.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of January 16, 2024, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Etchart made the motion to approve the January 16, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Etchart/Cooper

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

4. Public Comments

- None

*****The Board went into closed session at 6:03 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 6:14 pm.*****

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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 January 16, 2024, to February 15, 2024, in the amount of:

Payables:	\$ 136,407.55
Payroll:	<u>\$ 55,175.92</u>
Total:	\$ 191,583.47

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables from January 16, 2024, to February 15, 2024. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a). **Review Draft FY22/23 Financial Audit Statements and Reports. (Martinez)**

Mr. Martinez presented the draft FY22/23 Financial Audit Statements and Reports, which Cindy Fanning will present next month. Mr. Martinez requested that any questions or comments be provided so Ms. Fanning can respond next month.

Director Kentosh asked if the draft packet included the Management letter stating it was a clean audit. Mr. Martinez responded that the letter will be included with the packet presented next month. Director Cooper requested clarification on calculating pension liabilities based on state averages. Does that get “trued-up” at any point? Would the District get money back if its actuals were less than the state average? Director Oakland asked if the staff worked on any of the recommended action items from previous audits. Mr. Martinez explained that staff has been working on various recommended actions and explained the work done on the asset list as an example.

No Public Comment.

No Motion.

b). SDRMA Director Position candidate nomination. (Etchart)

Mr. Martinez shared the notice from SDRMA that there is an open Director position, so if the Board is interested in nominating a Director, the District can begin the process.

Director Cooper read that meetings are held in Sacramento 8-12 times per year.

Director Etchart noted that there was no interest at this time.

No Public Comment.

No Motion.

c). Approve the Hydrant Upgrade Project for El Camino Drive Contractor and expenses not to exceed \$30,000. (Martinez)

Mr. Martinez reported that during the water main break repair last month on El Camino, it was identified that the wharf head valve at 167 El Camino was broken and leaking. The broken valve needs to be replaced, and the 4" wharf head should be upgraded to a 6" fire hydrant. At the end of El Camino near the culvert is another 4" wharf head, and the valve servicing that wharf head is also broken. This location is more complex due to the 2" service line feeding St. Thomas Aquinas Church. In an emergency, MOWD staff would be unable to isolate the church from the distribution system and require all of El Camino to shut down for any repairs. It is recommended that this wharf head also be upgraded to a fire hydrant.

Mr. Martinez stated there is a \$75,000 approved budget for valve replacements/repairs. Four contractors responded to the RFP. Mr. Martinez noted that the District has recently used Sam Hill and Toro and would like to expand the contractor pool. Gruber Grading & Ag and Shirck Underground are both local and proposed amounts within the range of Sam Hill and Toro. Mr. Martinez stated that he would be confident and open to any of these contractors. The Board noted less than a \$450 difference between Sam Hill and Gruber Grading & Ag.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve Gruber Grading & Ag for the Hydrant Upgrade Project on El Camino, not to exceed \$30,000. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

8. General Manager's Report

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is 83.5%. Seasonal rainfall totals, as of 2/14/2024: M.O. Fire Station 16.10", Casitas Dam 18.58", Matilija Dam 21.45" and Nordhoff Ridge 24.29." Due to abundant rainfall and water flowing near our wells, the District had to stop pumping and turn on the Casitas connection on 2/8/2024. Staff completed the Lead & Copper inventory for each connection in the District and are currently working on exporting the data from Ziptility to the State report template. The Field Staff have installed all the AMI meters received, with 80 new meters delivered. Staff will begin installing those meters following the February meter reading. Staff is working with Beacon and Tyler Technologies on the AMI interface and training. Ferranti Electrical Engineering is still pending on the design plans for the District Office emergency generator. Southern CA Edison is relocating the upgraded panel to the N. Pueblo side of the office building, closer to the Edison line. Mr. Martinez observed that the Hwy 33 shoulder has dropped further with recent rain events, but the main line is still holding. According to Mr. Martinez, Union Engineering is still waiting for CalTrans to approve the materials list before work to expose the main line completely. Mr. Martinez and staff are working on a scope of work to send out for bid to remove and properly dispose of the AC line. Staff is actively working on the Treatment Plant grant application documents. Mr. Martinez reported that two will-serve letters were issued; one was for a manufactured ADU for an existing service, and one conditional will-serve was finalized after the purchase of the additional water allocation from Casitas MWD. A few leaks occurred, including a main line leak on El Camino Dr and a service line leak on S. Pueblo. The repairs for both were completed by Sam Hill & Sons. Mr. Martinez reviewed the 2024 Nitrate levels for January, which increased from December; however, it is expected that those levels will drop again following the recent rains.

No Public Comment.

9. Board Secretary's Report

Mr. Martinez presented Ms. Ward's monthly Board Secretary report. He highlighted that the C.A. Water & Wastewater Arrearage Assistance Program announced they are extending the program to include arrearages between June 16, 2021 – December 31, 2022, the application was submitted and approved, Ms. Ward is awaiting the funding of \$17,804. The SWRCB eAR is due by April 15, 2024. The District is waiting on the annual Consumer Confidence Report form FGL. Form 700 Conflict of Interest filings are due by April 1. The District had another eligible customer receive assistance from the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program for \$2,495, bringing that customer current on their account. Mr. Martinez noted that security cameras were installed outside the District Office, Ms. Ward has access to the camera footage and alerts remotely and from within the office. Staff continue to work on the required documents for the Replacement Treatment Plant grant application. Ms. Ward has been working on the updated Employee Policy Handbook, as well as Emergency and Operations plans and procedures, which will go to the Committees for review before Board approval and implementation. Staff continues to work on scanning and archiving policies, procedures, deeds, easements, and historical maps.

No Public Comment.

10. Board Committee Reports

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Meeting was cancelled.
- 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: Call with SWRCB scheduled for tomorrow.

11. Old Business

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

12. Director Announcements/Reports

- Director Kentosh: Discussed the 2023 Casitas MWD rate increase and stated that the Casitas GM had reached out stating he was open to discussing rates with MOWD and VRWD. Director Kentosh asked if any Directors would help perform a rate analysis with him. Directors Oakland and Cooper responded, affirming interest in the rate analysis. Additionally, Director Kentosh wanted to bring to the attention of the Board and Attorney a point of consideration from another agency regarding Ex Parte, reporting out any communications that Directors have had. Attorney Nielson stated that Directors need to report any bias or conflict of interest for agenda items.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: No report.
- Director Cooper: Recommends the GM look at the District insurance deductible for the Hwy 33 repairs, including costs associated with purchasing water while wells 1 and 2 are offline.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on March 19, 2024 at 6:00 pm. There being no further business to conduct at this time, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President