

Regular Meeting
June 18, 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 6:04 pm.

1. Call to Order

The Board President, Mike Etchart, called the meeting to order at 6:04 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, Summer Ward, Board Secretary. Attorney Present: (via teleconference) Stuart Nielson and Jeanne Zolezzi (Closed Session only).

Absent: None.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of May 21, 2024, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the May 21, 2024 meeting minutes. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

4. Public Comments

- None

****The Board went into closed session at 6:06 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.

- 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 7:18 pm.****

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Attorney Nielson reported that the Board discussed pending litigation, and there are no actions to report.

6. **Financial Matters**

Approval of Payroll and Payables from May 16, 2024, to June 15, 2024, in the amount of:

Payables:	\$ 88,432.91
Payroll:	<u>\$ 53,035.15</u>
Total:	\$ 141,468.06

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables from May 16, 2024, to June 15, 2024. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a). **Approve staff position salary range adjustments, effective July 1, 2024.**
(Etchart/Martinez)

Mr. Martinez presented the recommendation to approve salary range adjustments for staff positions. The Executive Committee requested staff to conduct a salary study of local water agencies to compare MOWD position salary ranges. Staff presented the findings, and after review and discussion, the Executive Committee recommended board action to approve increasing each salary cap to more closely align with VRWD. MOWD remains below VRWD but will close the gap, which will aid MOWD in recruiting and retaining employees.

Director Kentosh asked for clarification on salary steps versus salary range and whether this was part of the new performance management policy. Staff explained that MOWD uses salary ranges and not prescribed steps. The new performance management policy allows for lump sum and/or percentage merit increases to an employee's wage.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the recommended staff position salary ranges, effective July 1, 2024. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

b). Approve a 7% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to staff's current pay, effective July 1, 2024. (Etchart/Oakland)

Director Oakland presented the recommendation to approve a 7% cost of living adjustment for staff. The Executive Committee reviewed the current CPI for the local area and was initially considering a 3% COLA. After reviewing the salary ranges of other local water districts and the actual impact on each employee's current pay, along with the recommendation from Director Kentosh that the Board catch up the COLA from previous years, a total of 7% is recommended, effective July 1, 2024.

Director Etchart noted that the District has great staff, and we want to keep them.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the 7% cost of living adjustment to staff's current pay, effective July 1, 2024. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Kentosh

(5) Ayes- M/S/C

8. General Manager's Report

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is still at 100%. Seasonal rainfall totals, as of 5/16/2024: M.O. Fire Station 25.9", Casitas Dam 35.2", Matilija Dam 42.22", and Nordhoff Ridge 48.35." The District received the 55 – 1" AMI meters and will begin installation following the meter reading this week. The electrical design plans for the Office Emergency Generator are 100% complete; Oilfield Electric recommended a budget of \$138,000 to purchase and install the emergency generator. Union Engineering has installed all the pillars; they are working on installing and testing tie-backs to hold the wall up, and excavation will continue. Mr. Martinez reported that the hydrant the Granite Construction truck hit on N. La Luna at Maricopa Hwy totals \$74,447.21; Granite has been in communication and is pending payment. Field staff has completed district weed abatement. No will-serve letters were issued in the past month. Nitrate levels at Well 8 continue to remain low. Mr. Martinez reviewed the continuous monitoring option; however, HACH is currently working on resolving some inconsistencies with the instrumentation. Mr. Martinez will continue to monitor and work towards bringing Well 8 back online.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward presented the monthly Board Secretary report. The Employee Handbook 2024: spiral bound hard copies have been delivered; updates will be reviewed with staff; signed acknowledgments will go in each employee's personnel files. Staff provided the pumping and well level interval data to the UVRGA for November 2023- May 2024. Leslie's computer was replaced due to its age and failing components; it is used to access the server and credit card processing system, and the total installation cost is \$2,665. Staff will complete CPR/First Aid recertification this summer, coordinated with Ventura River Water District and the Red Cross. Staff sent the Financial Auditing Services RFP to six firms; two responded with clarifying questions, proposals are pending. If the District does not receive adequate responses, staff will send the RFP to more firms. Billing and customer service orders were all within the normal range. Staff uploaded the new DDW Lead & Copper Inventory report, which is due before October 1, 2024.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: Met and discussed salary study, range adjustments, and cost of living adjustment.
- UVRGA: Met, rate hearing, and new extraction fees are being implemented.
- 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: Ms. Ward stated that she has contacted the County contact to schedule a meeting with the Treatment Plant committee without a reply. Director Cooper recommended adding her to the email request.
- Casitas Rates – No report.

12. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: No report.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: No report.
- Director Cooper: Continuing work on the Treatment Plant grant, we will need to do more work on the reasons not to consolidate per the State's recommendation.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on July 16, 2024, at 6:00 pm. There being no further business to conduct at this time, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:52 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President