

Regular Meeting

May 20, 2025

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. Attorneys Present: Stuart Nielson and Jeanne Zolezzi (closed session only).

**Absent:** None.

### **3. Approval of the Minutes**

**Approval of the April 15, 2025, Regular Board Meeting minutes.**

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the April 15, 2025 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 6:03 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.

- 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 6:51 pm.\*\****

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

6. **Financial Matters**

a) **Approval of Payroll and Payables from April 16, 2025, to May 15, 2025, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 224,010.26
Payroll:	<u>\$ 49,652.54</u>
Total:	\$ 273,758.39

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables from April 16, 2025, to May 15, 2025. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Cooper

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a) **Receive Well 4a Rehab Report and discuss and approve the purchase of the down-hole equipment for Well 4a.**

Mr. Martinez introduced Curtis Hopkins of Hopkins Groundwater. Mr. Hopkins presented the report of findings from the Well 4a Rehabilitation. He summarized that the rehabilitation work resulted in double the performance, and the well will be able to produce more for longer than ever before. Curtis noted that the equipment downhole had significant iron bacteria due to dis-similar metals and needed to be removed. Mr. Martinez reviewed the three options for replacing the downhole equipment. Option 1 Cast Iron Pump End (\$111,704): would corrode again quickly; Option 2 Cast Iron Pump End Epoxy Coated (\$115,304): any blemish in the coating would create a spot for corrosion; Option 3 Stainless Steel Pump End (\$149,571): Expected life 15+ years

(Hopkins recommended). Mr. Martinez requested that the Board include a small buffer in the approved expense for a potential increase in material costs due to timing.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve Option 3 Stainless Steel equipment for \$149,571, plus \$10,000, for a maximum expense of \$159,571. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Kentosh

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

**b) Approve Cross Connection Control Plan Consultation expense for \$7,500.**

Ms. Ward reviewed the transition of the Cross Connection Control program from the County of Ventura's Environmental Health Division to the individual water purveyors. Districts received notice that the County would be terminating contracted services as of July 1, 2025. MOWD has contracted with the County program since 1973. Due to the new California Cross Connection Control Plan (CCCCP) requirements, the County will no longer provide these services. The new state regulation has several components. MOWD has subscribed to an online system (Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI)) that automatically sends out all customer notifications of testing dates, tracks all completed customer backflow tests, verifies backflow tester credentials, and ensures that testing kit calibrations meet the new requirements. Separately, the District will contract with a Cross Connection Specialist to conduct hazard assessments of all properties within the District, as required by the new regulations. Today, Ms. Ward noted that staff are requesting approval to contract with BSI Online for a one-time fee of \$7,500 for consultation on the creation of the MOWD CCCC and related documents, including resolutions and/or ordinances, to ensure compliance with the new California regulation. Ms. Ward noted that there are adequate budget funds in the Other Professional and Regulatory line item.

Mr. Martinez provided an overview of what a cross-connection/backflow preventer is and its importance.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the BSI Consulting expense of \$7,500. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Pangea

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

c) **Approve FY25/26 Cost of Living Adjustment of 3% for staff effective 7/1/2025.**

Director Etchart presented the FY25/26 Cost of Living Adjustment of 3% for staff, effective July 1, 2025. Director Cooper requested clarification that the CPI data reflected the previous 12 months and was effective in the new fiscal year. Ms. Ward confirmed that, yes, the District uses the most recent annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the yearly Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for staff.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the 3% COLA for staff, effective July 1, 2025. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland

(5) Ayes – M/S/C

8. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 95.8%. Wells 1, 2, and the Treatment Plant are back online but not in use. Staff are seeking one additional CalARP consultant bid. The Sanitary Survey Inspection report and response have been completed. Field staff resolved all requests and followed up with pictures for DDW; all backlogged samples have been completed and are awaiting analysis. CIT continues to clean up the SCADA computer programming and reports. The Well 4a Redevelopment work has been completed successfully. Weed abatement is underway throughout District properties, conducted by field staff. AMI meters to complete route 5 are being received and will be installed. Will-Serve letters were provided for 311 Mesa, 706 Mesa, 215 N Encinal, and a Conditional letter for 124 S. Padre Juan.

Director Oakland requested an update on Well 8. Mr. Martinez reviewed the nitrate levels with the cost of blending and determined that it would not be beneficial for the District at this time. Director Oakland inquired about the feasibility of adding a separate AG pipeline, to which Mr. Martinez replied that the infrastructure costs involved are not financially feasible.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward highlighted that the annual Consumer Confidence Report for 2025 (based on 2024 Data) has been uploaded to the SWRCB and MOWD websites, and notices were included in the April 30 customer bills. Hard copies are available in the office. Ms. Ward requested that each Director sign and initial the annual bank signer forms so that they can update records for approved check signers. The backflow device tracking database and

customer notification system are being developed in conjunction with BSI Online. MOWD issued notices to all device owners within the District regarding the upcoming transition. Additionally, Ms. Ward created a dedicated Cross-Connection/Backflow Prevention page on the MOWD website. Beacon AMI meter reading data file issues have been resolved, and the District's billing and meter reading software can now communicate. Staff will begin working on setting up the EyeOnWater app. Ms. Ward stated that the Water Rate Study RFP has been drafted and will be reviewed by the Budget & Rate Committee before publishing. The FY 25/26 Budget is being drafted by staff and will be reviewed by the Budget and Rate Committee before being presented to the Board in June. FY 24/25 financial audit work has begun, with an on-site workday that occurred on May 5, 2025. Ms. Ward requested that directors who have not yet done so complete the required bi-annual trainings. Anyone needing assistance logging into the software should contact Ms. Ward.

No Public Comment.

**10. Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: April meeting canceled.
- Budget/Rate Committee: Will be scheduled to meet prior to the June Board meeting.
- 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: No report.

**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 June 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 8:01 pm.

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**Board Secretary**

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**Board President**