

Regular Meeting

July 15, 2025

6:00 pm

Meiners Oaks Water District

202 W. El Roblar Drive

Ojai, CA 93023-2211

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Board President, Mike Etchart, called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm. The meeting was also available via teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Present: Board President, Mike Etchart, Board Directors: Christian Oakland, James Kentosh, and Joe Pangea. Staff Present: General Manager, Justin Martinez, and Board Secretary, Summer Ward. Attorney Present: Stuart Nielson.

Absent: Director, Christy Cooper

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the June 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Pangea made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2025, meeting. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Pangea/Kentosh

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Cooper

4. Public Comments

None.

*****The Board did not go into 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.

No discussion held.

*****The Board did not go into closed session*****

6. **Financial Matters**

- a) **Approval of Payroll and Payables from June 16, 2025, to July 15, 2025, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 228,879.85
Payroll:	<u>\$ 56,186.48</u>
Total:	\$ 345,066.33

Director Pangea made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables from June 16, 2025, to July 15, 2025. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

Ms. Ward noted that a summary report of the FY24/25 budget was included as informational only.

Director Kentosh asked if this was an unusually high payable amount. Ms. Ward clarified that every July, the District makes annual payments, such as liability, workers' compensation, and other annual memberships, which are due. As a result, July is typically a larger-than-usual monthly payable amount.

No Public Comment.

Pangea/Oakland

(4) Ayes – M/S/C
(1) Absent - Cooper

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

- a) **Approve the MOWD Cross-Connection Control Plan and adopt Resolution 20250715: A Resolution of Meiners Oaks Water District, CA5610005, Authorizing a Cross-Connection Control Program Plan, effective immediately.**

Mr. Martinez reviewed the transition from Ventura County to water purveyors due to the new CA SWRCB requirements. MOWD approved hiring the BSI Cross-Connection Specialist to assist staff in preparing a Cross-Connection Control Plan and Resolution in compliance with the new requirements. Staff reminded the Board that this plan will be submitted to the SWRCB for review and approval; the SWRCB may require revisions to the plan in the future. Staff noted that the online database and notification system went

live on July 1, 2025. MOWD will send welcome letters to all MOWD backflow device owners, providing them with the new program information.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve Resolution 20250715: A Resolution of Meiners Oaks Water District, CA5610005, Authorizing a Cross-Connection Control Program Plan, effective immediately. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

Roll Call Vote:

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Cooper

b) Presentation of CalARP proposals and approval of the selection of a CalARP consulting firm within a budgeted amount not to exceed \$30,000.

Mr. Martinez reviewed that in December 2024, MOWD underwent its annual Hazardous Material Business Plan inspection by the Ventura County Environmental Health Division. During the inspection, it was determined that MOWD must comply with the California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program by December 10, 2025. Due to the complexity of the CalARP Program, it was recommended that MOWD retain a consultant experienced in CalARP compliance to lead the Hazard review process. Management met with three qualified consulting firms, Resource Compliance, ACC Environmental, and Saltegra Consulting. Mr. Martinez reviewed the comparison of the three firms. Management recommends that the Board approve a contract with Resource Compliance for \$13,980 annually, for the next five years. MOWD's FY25/26 budget for CalARP is \$30,000. Resource Compliance is highly knowledgeable and experienced with the CalARP Program, having worked with multiple agencies that operate similar treatment processes. The firm participates in over 80 CalARP inspections annually and regularly presents at the CalARP conferences.

Director Oakland made a motion to approve Resource Compliance for CalARP Program compliance, with an annual expense of up to \$14,000. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Pangea

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Cooper

c) **Receive and consider customer requests for financial relief related to a significant water leak at 727 Oso Rd.**

Mr. Martinez presented the customer's request for financial relief. He provided firsthand details of how the leak was identified and the timely response by the customer to repair the leak. Unfortunately, the leak was not in an easily detectable area of the property, and 526 units of water were used in a single bill cycle.

The Board discussed how leaks have been handled historically and the options available to address them. Attorney Nielsen stated that precedent indicates the District offers no financial relief for a leak beyond the reduction of the Drought Surcharge (applicable only during a drought); staff noted that extended non-punitive payment plans of up to 24 months have been offered to customers in the past.

The Board discussed the possibility of a Board Committee drafting a water leak forgiveness policy in the future, with the assurance that any forgiveness would not result in a loss of revenue from cost-based services.

The Board directed staff to inform the customer that no bill reduction will be granted; however, they may opt for a 24-month (non-punitive) payment plan.

No Public Comment.

No Motion.

d) **Receive and consider New Meters, Allocations & Expansion of Services Committee recommendations for APN 017-0-160-15 (W. El Roblar & La Luna) to approve: 1) Account reclassification back to Ag. 2) Allocation Adjustment to Ag calculation.**

Mr. Martinez reviewed the background of the case, including the classification of the parcel and the timing of the new MOWD allocation program. The new owners took over after the parcel was reclassified from Agricultural to Residential Use in 2020. The new owners, who have registered with VCAILG, are in the process of partnering with the Farmhand Foundation to utilize the property as an innovation and trial farm, focusing on testing cropping systems specifically designed to conserve water, enhance biodiversity, and improve soil health. The owner met with the New Meters, Allocations & Expansion of Services Committee on June 20, 2025. It was noted that although the new owners drilled a private well, its production remains low, at approximately 50 gallons per minute (gpm), and is high in Boron. The owner hopes to blend the well water with MOWD water on the property. After discussion and review of the recalculation of the parcel's allocation based on the Agricultural formula, the committee recommends that the Board approve both reclassifying the parcel as agricultural and adjusting the allocation from the residential amount of 521 HCF/yr to the agricultural amount of 5,445 HCF/yr.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the reclassification of the parcel to Agriculture and adjust the allocation according to staff calculations (5,445 HCF/yr). Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland
(4) Ayes – M/S/C
(1) Absent - Cooper

8. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 94.9%. All wells remain offline due to the Well 4a rehab project. The Casitas connection was turned on April 10, 2025. All replacement well equipment and materials are expected to arrive in early August, with installation completed by the end of August. Once the work is completed at Well 4a, the District will turn off the Casitas connection and run on MOWD wells, as the well levels are in good shape. The Cross-Connection Control Program is ready for approval and submission to the SWRCB. Management met with three consulting firms for the new CalARP program. Weed abatement has been completed, and ongoing maintenance will continue. The District received AMI meters and endpoints to complete Route 5 (S. La Luna and S. Rice). The District's inventory has been restocked, including items such as service line parts, mainline valves, meter boxes, and others. No will-serve letters were issued. Mr. Martinez noted that he had a discussion with EPD regarding alternative, less expensive treatment plant options, should the District not receive grant funding.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward reported that the backflow device tracking database and customer notification system went live on July 1, 2025. The SWRCB granted MOWD an extension to submit the Cross-Connection Control Plan and resolution until September 30, 2025. Staff are working on creating instructions and personalized customer notifications for the EyeOnWater app, specifically for customers with the new AMI meters. The Water Rate Study RFP was published on July 8, 2025; proposals are due by August 15, 2025. Management updated all job descriptions to ensure uniformity and inclusion of the performance management core benchmarks. The updated job descriptions were reviewed with staff, and signed copies were filed in personnel records. The updated Employee Handbooks are being reprinted and will be reviewed with staff, the signed acknowledgment forms will also be filed in the personnel records. Performance evaluations are underway, including the annual staff survey and interviews with the Executive Committee. The FY 24/25 financial audit work will resume in August. Ms. Ward noted that the total billed amount in June is higher than in

June 2024, due to higher consumption and the temporary Casitas Surcharge, while MOWD is purchasing water during the Well 4a repairs. Ms.Ward reminded Directors to complete their biennial training.

No Public Comment.

10. Board Committee Reports

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met, 1) special meeting for rate change did not have a quorum, so it was rescheduled; 2) rescheduled meeting held and rate change passed; 3) discussed professional services cost comparison; 4) discussed Rincon Consultants cost increases; 5) preparing to discuss a change in the voting requirements.
- Budget/Rate Committee: No report.
- Emergency Management Committee: No report.
- Allocations, New Meters & Expansion of Services Committee: Met, discussed pending requests, including agenda item 7d.
- 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: His matters in Portland are handled, and he should be present for future meetings.
- Director Oakland: No report
- Director Pangea: Asked if there were pending items for the Emergency/Safety Committee.
- Director Cooper: No report
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on August 19, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President