

Regular Meeting
January 20, 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 6:00 pm. The meeting was also available via teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Present: Board President, Mike Etchart, Board Directors: James Kentosh, Christine Cooper, and Joe Pangea. Staff Present: General Manager, Justin Martinez, and Board Secretary, Summer Ward. Attorney Present: Stuart Nielson; and Jeanne Zolezzi (closed-session only).

Absent: Director, Christian Oakland.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the December 16, 2025, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Pangea made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2025, meeting. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Pangea/Kentosh

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Oakland

4. Public Comments

David Todd provided recommendations and areas of concern regarding various aspects of the new backflow program, specifically regarding the hazard assessments and the potential mandate for some customers to install a device. Mr. Todd will submit his written comments to District staff for consideration. Mr. Martinez and the Board thanked Mr. Todd for his comments and will discuss these matters further.

5. **Time-Certain (6:05 pm) Board Action and/or Discussion: Receive presentation from RDN Water Rate Study Consultants and approve the funding option(s).**

Mr. Anthony Elowsky presented to the Board and public the proposed five funding options to cover identified capital improvement projects, reserves, and approximate operating expenses, based on current revenues. Director Cooper asked if the firm sees any small utilities issuing bonds for big capital projects. Mr. Elowsky stated that small utilities typically do not issue bonds; most projects are funded by loans, which are currently running around 5%, or grants. Director Kentosh requested that the Board select two options to explore: option 1 covering both the treatment plant and tank 2, and option 2 covering tank 2 only with increased purchased water expense; the Board agreed.

Mr. Elowsky will prepare a memo outlining the two options, including the assumed increase in purchased water, and assessing the loan and bond funding impacts. Once the Board selects a funding option, RDN will construct the proposed rate structure and plan.

Public Comment:

Mr. Todd asked who at the District he could speak to about options with the replacement treatment plant. Mr. Martinez asked that he contact him to discuss further.

No Motion.

****The Board went into closed session at 6:48 pm.****

6. **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 7:28 pm.****

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

7. **Financial Matters**

- a) **Approval of Payroll and Payables from December 16, 2025, to January 15, 2026, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 105,006.90
Payroll:	\$ <u>68,117.89</u>
Total:	\$ 173,124.79

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables for December 16, 2025, to January 15, 2026. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

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

8. **Board Discussion/Actions**

- a) **Election of the Board Officers.**

Board President: Director Cooper made the motion to nominate Director Etchart as the Board President. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

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

Board Vice President: Director Cooper made the motion to nominate Director Oakland as the Board Vice President. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

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

b) **Review and nominate Board Committee Memberships and Representatives.**

Ms. Ward reviewed the 2025 Board Committee Members and Representatives and noted that she has not received any input from any Director requesting to be removed from a Committee. However, Director Cooper has asked for a replacement on the Ventura River Watershed Council, as these meetings conflict with her work schedule. The Board agreed that Ms. Ward will replace Director Cooper, that Mr. Martinez will remain the alternate, and that a Director may be invited based on the agenda topic. Board President Etchart requested that Ms. Ward update the Board Committee Memberships and Representatives accordingly.

No Public Comment.

No Motion

c) **Approve Resolution 20260120: Appointing Director and Alternate Director to the Board of Directors of the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency Joint Powers 2026-2028.**

Ms. Ward explained that this is the standard two-year resolution appointing the MOWD representatives on the UVRGA. Director Kentosh and Mr. Martinez agreed to continue as representatives, unless others wanted to serve on the UVRGA.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve Resolution 20260120: Appointing Director Kentosh and Mr. Martinez as the Director and Alternate Director on the UVRGA Board of Directors for 2026-2028. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Pangea

Roll Call Vote:

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Oakland

d) **Receive copies of the updated Brown Act in accordance with SB 707.**

Ms. Ward explained that although the District has always made copies of the Brown Act available to the Board, SB 707 mandates that the updated Brown Act be distributed to elected officials now and to all new incoming elected officials during onboarding. Ms. Ward provided hard copies to each Director and stated that electronic versions are available upon request.

No Public Comment.

No Motion

9. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 99.3% as of January 15, 2026. Wells 2, 4a & 7 are online. The District had to temporarily switch to Casitas from 12/28/25-1/14/26 due to stormwater running too close to the wells. Well 4a equipment is under inspection and will be scheduled for installation soon. Well 1 was pulled and inspected by Cascade Well and Pump; repair cost pending. The District is contracted with Resource Compliance to complete the MOWD CalARP enrollment and ensure ongoing compliance. Work continues to make progress. AMI meter replacements are completed for FY25/26. Hazard Assessments for the Cross-Connection Control Program have started. Staff will evaluate the impact of the assessments and discuss possible solutions with the Board in the future. Mr. Martinez requested a proposal for an EPD Replacement Package Treatment Plant as an alternative, less expensive option. There was one AMS leak on S. Pueblo, repaired by staff.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward provided a summary of administrative activities. Staff submitted the annual Ventura County Environmental Reporting (CERS) reports for each site on December 23, 2025. Staff is currently working on the annual water use reporting using the SWRCB's new CalWATRS portal for October 2024 – September 2025, due by January 31, 2026. Staff are working on the new EPA Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans for the Small Community Drinking Water Infrastructure Act, section 1433 of the State Drinking Water Act, amended by America's Water Infrastructure Act, section 2013. Initial certification for the RRA is due by June 2026, and the ERP certification is due by December 2026. The Water Rate Study presentation was provided at today's regular board meeting. The draft Financial Audit FY24/25 is pending financials from the auditors, and we anticipate presentation to the Board in March.

No Public Comment.

11. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met, Elected Officers: Board President, Jenny Tribo; Vice President, Bruce Keubler; Secretary, James Kentosh.
- 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.

12. **Old Business**

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

13. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: No report
- Director Oakland: Absent.
- Director Pangea: No report
- Director Cooper: No report.
- Director Etchart: Sad news that the heritage oak on El Camino fell on Christmas Eve.

14. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on February 17, 2026, at 6:00 pm. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 8:02 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President