

Regular Meeting
February 17, 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: Christian Oakland, 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: None.

3. **Approval of the Minutes**

Approval of the January 20, 2026, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2026, meeting. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Kentosh

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent January 20, 2026 - Oakland

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 6:40 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 January 16, 2026, to February 15, 2026, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 99,981.68
Payroll:	<u>\$ 59,426.27</u>
Total:	\$ 159,407.95

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables for January 16, 2026, to February 15, 2026. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Oakland
(5) Ayes – M/S/C

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a) **Discuss the Water Financial Plan and Rate Study Memo.**

Ms. Ward presented the memo prepared by RDN, in follow-up to the January 20th presentation to the Board. The memo focuses on the two primary funding options the Board selected: option 1, funding both the replacement treatment plant and tank 2; and option 2, funding only tank 2. Both funding options include figures based on traditional and state revolving fund loans. Ms. Ward noted that this memo essentially covers the same data points as January, just broken out a little further. The most notable difference is that, based on the Board's request, the option of not funding the treatment plant includes additional expenditures for purchasing water from CMWD, while also accounting for some reductions in UVRGA pumping extraction fees, reduced electricity, and chlorine expenses.

Additionally, at the end of the memo is an example of how the simplified rate structure would work based on the various funding options. The monthly fixed charges would be rolled into a single per-meter fee, and the per-HCF fee would reflect the cost-of-service, average annual casitas surcharge, and standby fees.

Director Pangea requested clarification on the Casitas Surcharge, since that amount is variable. Ms. Ward explained that RDN used MOWD's average annual purchase amount, based on CMWD's rates, and rolled that expense into the proposed rate, thereby removing the need for MOWD to add fees to customer bills. Director Kentosh would like more details on the fixed-rate calculations, the ratio of fixed to variable, and the differences between meter sizes. Director Kentosh would also like an explanation of what "status quo" means in the context of the proposals. Directors Kentosh and Cooper asked whether RDN could provide a comparison chart of local agencies based on larger meter sizes, such as 1" or 2". Director Kentosh added that staff and RDN have done a lot of good work, and that this study was necessary because a rate study had not been conducted for some time.

Director Cooper recommended that the Board choose funding option 2, as there may be other options for the treatment plant. If MOWD can obtain a state revolving fund loan at a lower rate (option 2a), it will be in a better position. Mr. Martinez stated that in his GM report, he will discuss some of the options for the replacement treatment plant. Attorney Nielsen stated that the Board can always implement a lower water rate than scheduled. Ms. Ward requested that Directors call or email her with any additional questions so that she can forward them to RDN for a response.

Director Etchart asked for consensus on which funding option to recommend to RDN for further work in the rate study. The Board agreed that option 2 was the most reasonable option to move forward with; Ms. Ward to notify RDN of the selection, as well as the questions raised during discussion.

No Public Comment.

No Motion.

8. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 99.8% as of February 17, 2026. The District wells came back online on 1/14/26 after surface stormwater receded. Well 4a equipment is being installed. Mr. Martinez shared that the temporary downhole equipment had already begun to corrode. Well 1 was pulled and inspected by Cascade, with a repair cost of \$110,000. Work continues on the CalARP compliance documents. Eye wash stations are being installed at each facility; four of five have been completed. Mr. Martinez

shared that he received a proposal from EPD for a package treatment plant, estimated at \$600,000, plus the destruction of the existing plant and preparation of the concrete pad for the new installation; the total project is estimated to be less than \$1M. Rainfall totals for each station were reviewed, noting Meiners Oaks Fire Station at 23.74" for the season and Nordhoff Ridge at 46.06". Mr. Martinez reported one main line leak at El Camino Corto and S. La Luna on January 20 due to corrosion. The District had Toro Enterprises complete the repair with assistance from District operators.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward provided a summary of administrative activities. Staff submitted the annual water use reports to the SWRCB on January 28. The quarterly SWRCB Drought reports for October – December 2025, as well as the annual 2025 reports, were submitted on January 30. Staff is currently working on the eAR report for the SWRCB, which is separate from the annual water use and drought reporting. The eAR is due before April 1. MOWD staff were scheduled to meet with Resource Compliance to continue the CalARP compliance documentation on February 18; however, staff were notified that our representative was leaving the organization and that our new representative would be scheduling the next onsite visit soon. Staff are working on the new EPA Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans for Small Community Water Systems; the certifications are due by June and December 2026, respectively. The Water Rate Study funding options were presented at the January 20 regular board meeting; the follow-up memo was discussed earlier in this meeting. VRWD has contracted with Bryce Consulting to complete a compensation and benefits study, for which MOWD will receive a copy after its completion. The auditors submitted the State Controller's Report and are preparing for presentation to the Board, likely at the March meeting.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met, no updates to report.
- 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: No report.

12. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: No report
- Director Oakland: Will be having surgery on the day of the March meeting.
- Director Pangea: No report
- Director Cooper: No report.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on March 17, 2026, at 6:00 pm. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:43 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President