

Regular Meeting
March 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: 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 February 17, 2026, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2026, meeting. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Pangea

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Oakland

4. **Time Certain: Presentation and approval of FY25 Financial Audit, Resolution 20260317.**

Ms. Ward introduced Paul Kaymark, CPA from Nigro & Nigro PC. Paul joined the meeting via web conference to present the FY 25 Financial Audit. He reviewed the scope of work, auditor responsibilities, audit results (specifically a clean, unmodified opinion), and the audited financial statements.

Directors Cooper and Kentosh requested clarification on the "management override of controls" in the required communications letter. Mr. Kaymark clarified that those sections are standard language and not specific to MOWD. These are areas that the auditors

highlight for all clients. Directors thanked Mr. Kaymark and noted that Ms. Ward would never allow management to override the internal controls. Director Kentosh requested further clarification regarding the two tiers of employees outlined in the retirement section. Mr. Kaymark explained that each tier is based on year of hire. The state of California changed the Classic Tier 1 (hired before 1/1/2013) to PEPR Tier 2 (hired on or after 1/1/2013). This was not something MOWD elected to do; it was automatic with the state. Directors thanked Mr. Kaymark and staff for a job well done.

Director Cooper made the motion to approve Resolution 20260317: Financial Audit FY 2024-2025. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Kentosh

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Oakland

5. Public Comments

One public member was present online, but did not comment.

*****The Board went into closed session at 6:21 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 6:41 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 February 16, 2026, to March 15, 2026, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 256,598.67
Payroll:	\$ <u>56,822.28</u>
Total:	\$ 313,420.95

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables for February 16, 2026, to March 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) **Approve Memorandum of Understanding – Ventura River Watershed Arundo Eradication and Riparian Restoration Program.**

Director Kentosh provided a brief background on Arundo in the watershed and the reasons why removal of the invasive species is beneficial. He added that this MOU with Ojai Land Conservancy and others will support the coordinated effort to remove the Arundo and work towards a healthier habitat. The MOU commits MOWD to \$10,000 the first year and will be evaluated annually for continued participation.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the MOU: Ventura River Watershed Arundo Eradication and Riparian Restoration Program and authorize its execution. Director Pangea seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

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

9. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 99.9% as of March 12, 2026. Well 4a rehab and new equipment installation are complete, production showing up to 655 gpm. The well rehab has resulted in higher production than the well's historical production, with a previous high of 500 gpm. Mr. Martinez stated that the eyewash stations have been installed at each well site. Staff held a meeting with HydroCorp regarding backflow hazard

assessments, with a proposal pending. Mr. Maxwell will be on military leave from March 16 to July 16, 2026, for training. Will-Serve letters were issued for a new primary dwelling at 171 S. Pueblo, an ADU at 967 El Camino Corto, and a primary dwelling rebuild at 658 S. Rice Rd.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward provided a summary of administrative activities. Ms. Ward reminded Directors and eligible officials that the annual Form 700s are due to the County before April 1, 2026. Resource Compliance is scheduled to meet with staff on March 24 to continue work on the CalARP program assessments. 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. Work continues on the Water Rate Study, including preparations for the Prop 218 hearing. The FY24/25 Financial Audit was presented earlier in this meeting; work on FY25/26 will begin. Ms. Ward contacted Ventura County Elections for a timeline for the upcoming general election, and nomination paperwork should be available around June.

No Public Comment.

11. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met; Mr. Martinez attended; stated Bryan Bondy presented partial model runs.
- 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: Stated he is not planning to run again in this election cycle unless there are not enough candidates to fill the seats.
- Director Oakland: Absent.
- Director Pangea: No report
- Director Cooper: Announced that the US Bureau of Reclamation has launched a new cycle of grant funding for small utility projects as well as larger drought management projects.
- Director Etchart: No report.

14. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on April 21, 2026, at 6:00 pm. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President