

**UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING MAY 14, 2020**

The Board meeting was held via teleconference, in accordance with California Executive Order N-25-20. Directors present were: Bruce Kuebler, Emily Ayala, Diana Engle, Larry Rose, Susan Rungren, Glenn Shephard, and Angelo Spandrio. Also present were: Executive Director and GSP Project Manager Bryan Bondy, Agency Administrator Summer Ward, and Agency Counsel Keith Lemieux. The following members of the public were present: Abhishek Singh, Intera (1:53 pm).

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Chairperson Diana Engle called the meeting order at 1:00 pm.
- 2) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Not recited.

CLOSED SESSION

The Chair adjourned the meeting to Closed Session at 1:07 pm.

3) **CLOSED SESSION ITEMS**

- a. **Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation:** Consideration of initiations of litigation pursuant to Government Code §54956.9(c); One Case.

The Chair adjourned Closed Session and resumed Regular Session at 1:34 pm.

The Agency Administrator performed a second roll call and confirmed all directors had returned to regular session. Chair Engle reported on the closed session. The Board discussed potential litigation. No actions were taken.

- 4) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – No changes were proposed.
- 5) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA**
None.
- 6) **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- a. **Approve Minutes from April 9, 2020, Regular Board Meeting**
- b. **Approve Financial Report for April 2020**
- c. **Fiscal Year 2019/2020 3rd Quarter Budget Report**
- d. **Fiscal Year 2018/2019 Financial Statement Audit**

Chair Engle asked if the directors would like to pull any items for discussion. Director Shephard made the motion to approve items 5a-d. Director Ayala seconded the motion.

No public comments.

Roll Call Vote: B. Kuebler – Y L. Rose – Y E. Ayala – Y G. Shephard – Y

S. Rungren – Y D. Engle – Y A. Spandrio – Y

Absent: None.

Noes: None.

7) DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. **Directors may provide oral reports on items not appearing on the agenda.**
- b. **Directors shall report time spent on cost-share eligible activities for the 2017 Proposition 1 Sustainability Groundwater Management Planning (SGWP) Grant.**

Director Spandrio: Shared that Lake Casitas level is 44.8%, which is 108,000 acre-feet of storage. The Casitas MWD Board recently considered whether to move down from Stage 3 Water Shortage State 3 to Stage 2. Staff recommended Stage 2, but the Casitas MWD Board voted to remain at Stage 3. Casitas MWD has been under pressure from the public to reopen Lake Casitas for boating and fishing, but the Casitas MWD Board voted to approve continuance of the COVID-19 emergency declaration. No time to report.

Director Rungren: The Water Commission and Ventura City Council voted to move down to Stage 2 Water Shortage Emergency, which requires 10% conservation. However, the City wants to make sure its customers understand that a drought still exists and that customers in the Casitas service area must meet the Casitas MWD Stage 3 requirements. No time to report.

Director Shephard: No report and no time.

Director Ayala: No report. Time: 30 minutes (Stakeholder Engagement –Extraction Fees)

Director Rose: The Santa Clara River Environmental Reps are planning a June webinar regarding Groundwater Ecosystems. Well investigations for the 38 unlocated wells have been completed; most of these wells are de minimis, and extraction volumes will not impact the GSA estimated extraction amount. Executive Director Bondy and Director Rose will draft the DWR memo. Time: 2.0 Hrs

Director Kuebler: No report. Time: 30 minutes (Intera GSP Scope of Work Review)

Director Engle: No report. Time 30 minutes (Intera GSP Scope of Work Review)

8) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director reviewed the updates provided in the staff report for this item.

Director Engle requested clarification regarding the goal of the Wildlife Conservation Board grant. Executive Director Bondy explained that the grant would fund the development of a work plan that can cover a number of actions needed to address the data gaps in the GSP, including a pump shutoff test. Additional work with Ventura River Water District is necessary to clarify the required grant deliverables before developing an agreement for consideration.

The Executive Director reminded the directors that the California Department of Fish & Wildlife will be holding a webinar on May 15, 1 pm- 2 pm to present the results of the watershed criteria report. He highly recommended that the directors attend the webinar. He also noted that he would participate in the Ventura River Instream Flow teleconference on May 19.

No public comments.

9) ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Budget and Long Range Budget Projections

The Executive Director reviewed the staff report concerning the draft Fiscal Year 2020/2021 budget and long-range budget projections. He explained that two versions of the Budget and projections were prepared; the first (Option A) achieves the reserve target; the second (Option B), considers a lower reserve target, which partially mitigates the groundwater extraction fee increase during FY 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. He also stated that he prepared to make changes on the fly with the budget spreadsheet if the Board would like to explore different options.

Executive Director Bondy reminded the Board that adoption of the Budget would also set the Extraction Fee for 2020/2021. The Budget Committee has reviewed and is favorable of the proposed Budget and long-range projections, but noted that minor changes were made following committee review.

Director Ayala expressed concern regarding the farmers and the current financial uncertainty; some may be short on funds and be reluctant to pay the increased extraction fee.

Director Engle asked what the cost of eliminating the Technical Review Group. Executive Director Bondy stated \$61,750 over four years. Director Engle requested clarification on the expectation for ongoing participation in the Instream Flow program. Executive Director Bondy explained that the SWRCB model and CDFW flow recommendations coming in 2021 are not the end of that process; the next step will be to determine implementation measures. He assumes the Agency will be involved in the development of solutions because groundwater is important for surface water flow during dry periods in some areas.

No Public Comments

The Board discussed the two versions of the Budget and long-range projections.

Director Ayala recommended keeping the reserves lower, in order to keep the Extraction Fees as low as possible, as well as including an explanation to the pumpers of why the rate has increased.

Director Engle requested clarification regarding the Professional Fees (58005); does this contain all of the Executive Director's expenses? Executive Director Bondy replied that yes, all of his work is captured in Account 58005.

Director Spandrio made the motion to approve and adopt the Fiscal Year 2020/2021 and Long Range Budget Projects option B, including a new reserve target of \$74,000. Director Kuebler seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: B. Kuebler – Y L. Rose – Y E. Ayala – Y G. Shephard – Y

S. Rungren – Y D. Engle – Y A. Spandrio – Y

Absent: None.

Noes: None.

10) GSP GRANT ELIGIBLE ITEMS

a. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update (Grant Category (d); Task 11: GSP Development and Preparation)

Executive Director Bondy reviewed the staff report concerning the GSP development status. He reported that GSP work is progressing despite the current COVID-19 issues.

No Board discussion.

No public comments.

b. Intera Work Order No. 3 for GSP and Groundwater Flow Model Development

Executive Director Bondy reviewed the proposed Intera Work Order No. 3 for GSP and Groundwater Flow Model Development. He explained that the GSP Development Team has agreed on the division of work for the GSP development and completed an exhaustive GSP budgeting process in April 2020. The proposed work order addresses tasks assigned to Intera. Intera will develop the bulk of the remaining GSP content and compile the GSP document. The Executive Director will work closely with Intera, including the contribution of content to the GSP, notably the sustainable management criteria sections.

Public Comments: Abhishek Singh (Intera) thanked the Agency for the opportunity to assist with the GSP.

Director Kuebler made the motion to approve the recommended action, not to exceed \$418,780. Director Rungren seconded the motion.

Director Spandrio observed that the GSP schedule and the Work Order show the GSP at the end of FY 2022; looks great.

Director Rungren agreed with Director Spandrio, it looks good.

Director Kuebler asked if there were alternatives to a numerical model; Executive Director Bondy and Abhishek Singh both replied that various types of analytical solutions were considered as potential alternatives, but that the geometry of the basin and surface water flow variability which analytical approaches are not suited to address. Additionally, Director Kuebler expressed concern regarding the timing of public comments and stakeholder engagement during GSP development. Executive Director Bondy clarified that Intera will be using the information received during the comment period to revise the draft for the final GSP. The Board discussed the workload and shared resources for completing the GSP.

11) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Ad Hoc Stakeholder Engagement Committee

Director Ayala recommended sending out another update to Stakeholders. Executive Director Bondy plans to coordinate the next newsletter with the posting of the draft GSP content on the Agency website in June/July. Executive Director reported that the Agency Administrator is building a comment form on the Agency website for Stakeholders to submit questions and comments. The Stakeholder Committee will work with Ms. Ward to discuss potential venues for upcoming workshops.

12) ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 pm. The next Regular Board is scheduled for June 11, 2020, at 1:00 pm, location to be determined.

Action: _____

Motion: _____ Second: _____

B.Kuebler____ D.Engle____ A.Spandrio____ S.Rungren____ G.Shephard____ E.Ayala____ L.Rose____